

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 18, 2022

The Honorable Martha Williams  
Director  
United States Fish and Wildlife Service  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Director Williams:

We write to thank the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for including the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) Multi-Purpose Building and Public Recreational Facilities construction project in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 budget request for funding in FY 2023, and we look forward to your continued commitment to requesting funding for project completion in FY 2023 with the release of the upcoming FY 2023 USFWS Greenbook budget request.

As you are aware, the USFWS's FY 2022 budget request included \$6.25 million in funding for the construction phase of the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Multi-Purpose Building and Public Recreational Facilities in the line-item construction five-year plan. The funding was scheduled for FY 2023, which puts the project on path to be realized in this upcoming fiscal year. We are appreciative of USFWS efforts and encourage you to maintain your commitment to funding the project on the same timeline in the FY 2023 budget request.

The facilities on site at the Refuge continue to need vital upgrades; for instance, the small trailer that currently serves as the administrative office and visitor facilities needs to be replaced by buildings that properly welcome the visiting public and enhance the visitor experience. It is important that improvements for the Community and Nature Center facility are not unnecessarily delayed for those who frequently visit the Refuge from both the local community and outside the region.

The Refuge receives nearly 300,000 visitors each year and engages 20,000 annual community members through programming on-site and in local neighborhoods. The Refuge also factors into economic activity in the region; the tens of thousands of visitors provide a real benefit to the restaurants and other retail businesses in the Ridgefield area. The addition of a community center at the Refuge would provide an attraction for visitors to the Refuge and help provide a needed boost to businesses in the area. We have no doubt this center will improve the public's experience when they come here to discover the wildlife and native culture of this beautiful region.

The residents we serve cherish what this Refuge represents: unique access to the natural beauty and native culture that are part of the identity of this region. We thank you for your support and encourage you to consider the critical importance of the Community and Nature Center facility

to the local community and ask you to maintain your commitment to funding the project in the FY 2023 budget request.

Sincerely,



Jaime Herrera Beutler  
Member of Congress



Patty Murray  
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Shalanda Young, Acting Director, U.S. Office of Management and Budget